KPMG

Confederation of Indian Industry

The skills and competencies shift:

How organisations are preparing for the future of work



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Executive summary

Organisation are operating in a period of unprecedented workforce transformation. AI, digital technologies, sustainability priorities, and evolving business models are reshaping how work is performed and the capabilities organisation require. As workforce requirements evolve more rapidly than ever before, organisation must strengthen both emerging skills and enduring competencies such as adaptability, learning agility, collaboration, critical thinking, and human-AI decision-making. Workforce readiness is therefore becoming a key driver of organisational resilience, innovation, and long-term competitiveness.



Future-ready organisation could be distinguished not by access to technology alone, but by their ability to continuously build, deploy, and evolve workforce capabilities.

Traditional workforce models built around fixed roles, specialised expertise, and predictable career pathways are increasingly giving way to more dynamic approaches centred on skills, competencies, mobility, and continuous learning.

Skill requirements are evolving faster than traditional workforce models can adapt, making continuous learning and workforce agility critical priorities. Human capabilities such as analytical thinking, collaboration, adaptability, ethical judgment, and human-AI decision-making are becoming increasingly important as intelligent technologies assume a greater share of routine work. organisation are also transitioning toward skills-based workforce models that emphasize internal mobility, capability development, and dynamic talent deployment.

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Leadership imperatives

Build capability-driven talent models

Organisation should strengthen skills visibility, internal mobility, and capability-based talent deployment to improve workforce agility and align talent with evolving business priorities.

Embed continuous learning into everyday work

Continuous upskilling, reskilling, and experiential learning should become an integral part of work, enabling employees to adapt as skill requirements evolve.

Balance technical and human capabilities

Future workforce readiness expected to depend on combining AI, data, and digital skills with adaptability, collaboration, ethical judgment, and effective human-ai decision-making.

Key findings

1. **Skills and competency requirements are evolving faster than traditional workforce models can adapt.** AI, automation, advanced analytics, sustainability priorities, and changing business demands are accelerating capability shifts across industries.

2. **Human capabilities are becoming more valuable, not less**. As intelligent technologies automate routine activities, competencies such as analytical thinking, adaptability, collaboration, leadership, ethical judgment, and human-AI decision-making are becoming increasingly important differentiators

3. **Organisation are moving from job-based structures to skills-based workforce models**. Internal talent marketplaces, workforce mobility, skills intelligence, and capability-based talent deployment are increasingly replacing traditional approaches built around fixed roles and career pathways.

4. **Industries are converging around a common set of future capabilities**. AI and data literacy, digital fluency, customer-centricity, analytical thinking, collaboration, adaptability, and continuous learning are becoming foundational capability requirements across sectors.

5. **Future competitiveness will depend on learning velocity, adaptability, and the ability to continuously develop and redeploy talent**. organisation that can continuously identify, develop, deploy, and renew capabilities will be best positioned to sustain innovation, resilience, and long-term growth.

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The skills and competency challenge



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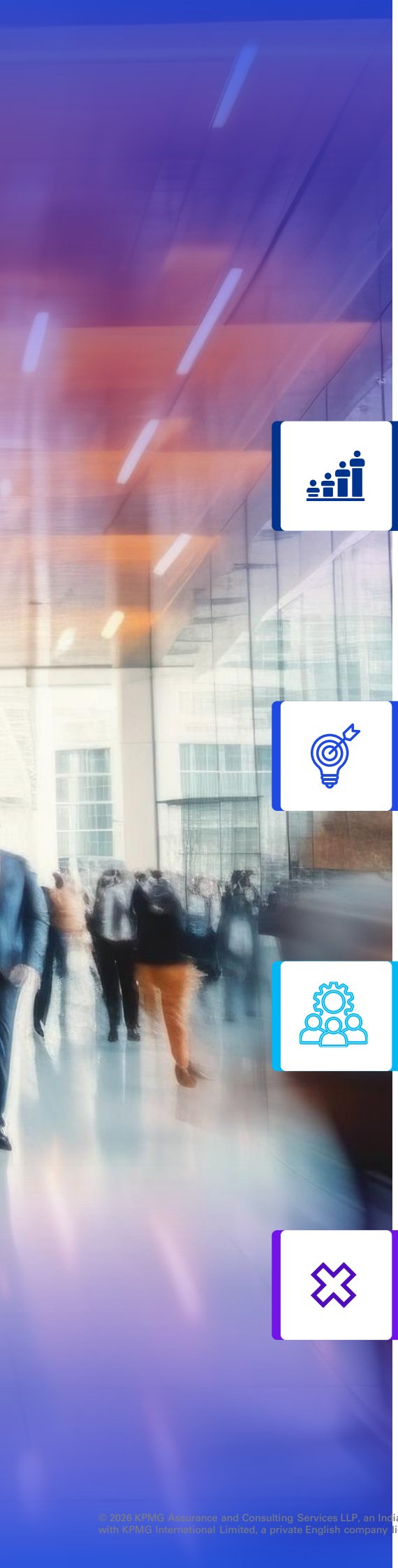

2.1 Why workforce readiness has Become a strategic priority

Workforce readiness is emerging as a strategic determinant of organisational resilience and growth.

Organisations are navigating unprecedented levels of technological disruption, workforce transformation and economic uncertainty. Workforce readiness is increasingly viewed as a strategic capability that enables organizations to sustain growth and execute transformation priorities.

Business strategy and talent strategy are becoming inseparable

As organisations accelerate digital transformation and adopt emerging technologies, workforce capabilities are becoming a critical determinant of business success. Talent decisions can no longer be made independently of strategic business objectives.

Workforce readiness requires adaptability, not prediction

Rather than attempting to forecast every future skill requirement, leading organisations are focusing on building learning agility, adaptability and resilience, enabling employees to respond effectively to evolving business demands.

Closing the action-intention gap

While employees often recognise the need to learn and adapt, many struggle to translate intention into action. In KPMG in India's view, organisations must create behavioral conditions that encourage continuous learning and capability development as part of everyday work

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2.2 The shrinking shelf-life of skills

The rapid adoption of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, automation and advanced analytics, is reshaping workforce capability requirements across industries. Skills that were once considered future-proof are evolving at an increasingly accelerated pace, creating new challenges for workforce planning and talent development.

As organisations navigate ongoing transformation, the focus is shifting from traditional reskilling initiatives to creating systems that support continuous capability renewal. Future-ready organizations are recognising that workforce resilience depends not only on acquiring new skills but also on fostering adaptability, learning agility and a culture of lifelong learning.

According to the LinkedIn workplace learning report:

25% of the skills required for jobs have changed since 2015, with the pace of change expected to accelerate significantly by 2030.

Source: Workplace Learning Report 2025, LinkedIn, 2025

According to SHRM's state of the workplace report:

83% of HR professionals report difficulty finding candidates with the skills required for current and emerging roles.

Source: State of the Workplace Report, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 2024.

According to SHRM's State Of The Workplace Report:

75% of HR professionals report skills gaps among job applicants as a significant challenge to recruitment and workforce readiness.

Source: state of the Workplace Report, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 2024.

KPMG in India perspective

The shrinking shelf-life of skills highlights a broader workforce challenge: organisations can no longer rely on periodic reskilling initiatives to maintain workforce readiness. From a behavioral science perspective, workforce adaptability is strengthened when employees are given opportunities to experiment, receive continuous feedback and apply new knowledge in real-world contexts. Organisations that embed these behaviors into everyday work are better positioned to continuously renew capabilities and respond to evolving business demands.

2.3 Beyond skills: Why competencies matter

As the lifespan of skills continues to shorten, organisations are increasingly asking a different question: what capabilities remain valuable even as technologies, tools and job requirements change? The answer lies in competencies, which provide employees with a more enduring foundation for navigating complexity, uncertainty and continuous transformation.

Competencies are what turn knowledge into performance. They bring together knowledge, behaviours and mindsets, and they show up in how a person approaches a problem, works with others and responds when conditions change.

Because they are expressed through behaviour rather than tied to any single tool, they travel with a person across roles, teams and business contexts.

Organisations are increasingly recognising that workforce effectiveness is shaped not only by what employees know, but also by how they apply, transfer and adapt knowledge across different situations. Competencies such as adaptability, critical thinking and collaboration enable individuals to remain effective even as business requirements continue to evolve.

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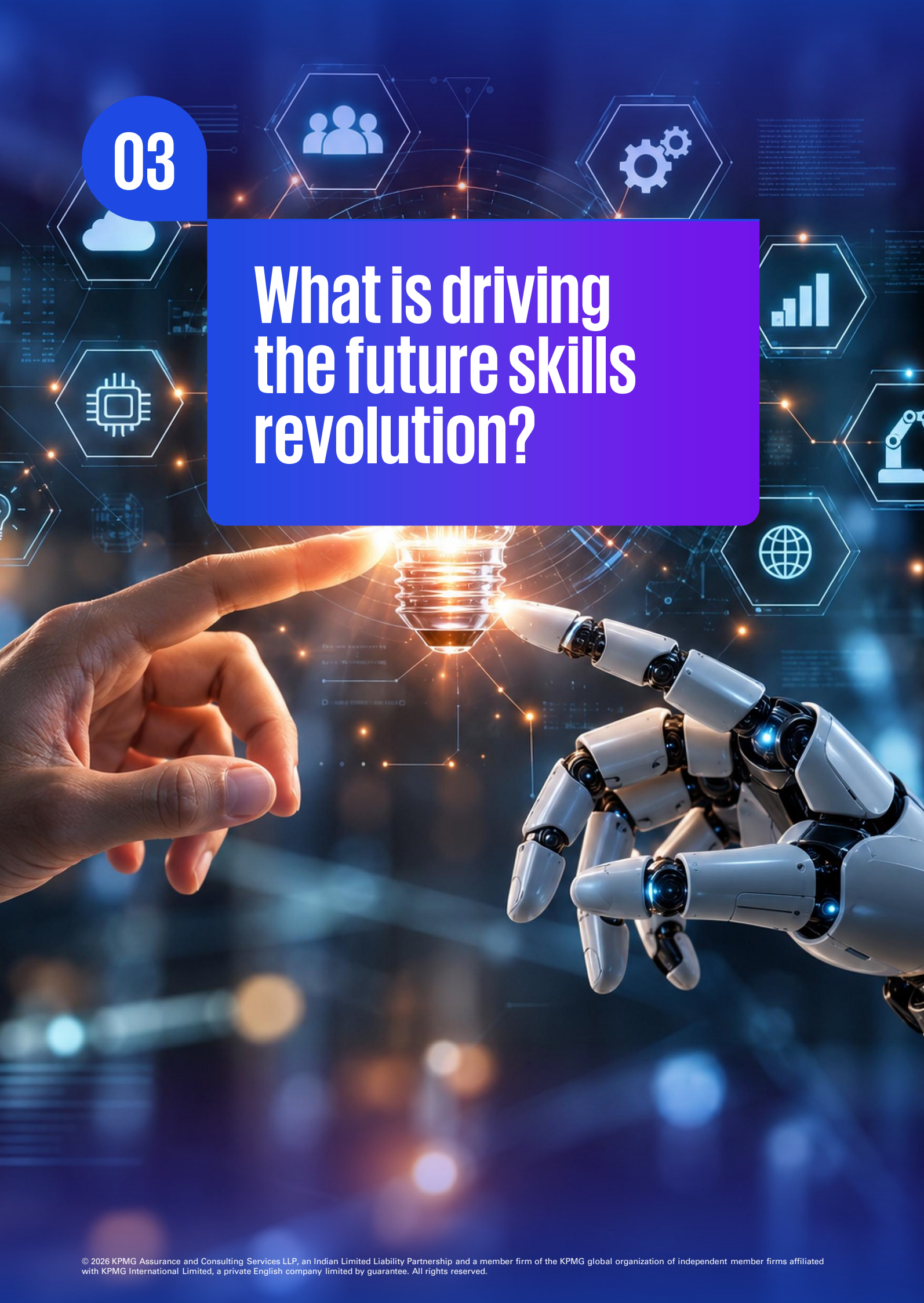
What is driving the future skills revolution?



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3.1 Emerging business priorities

Business priorities

workforce capability requirements are increasingly shaped by the convergence of digital transformation, sustainability obligations and changing customer expectations. Digital technologies are changing how companies sense demand, automate operations and personalise experiences. ESG priorities are moving from specialist reporting teams into strategy, finance, operations, procurement and product design. At the same time, customers expect faster, more transparent and increasingly responsible interactions across channels. Organisations therefore need employees who can combine digital fluency with sustainability literacy, commercial judgment, data interpretation and the ability to translate external expectations into operational decisions.

Why these priorities are changing workforce capability
Three external pressures are arriving at the same time. Together, these pressures change what employees need to know and how employees make day-to-day decisions.

Digital transformation

AI, data and automation are changing workflows and decision speed. Employees need digital fluency, process understanding and the ability to translate technology into measurable value.

Sustainability and ESG

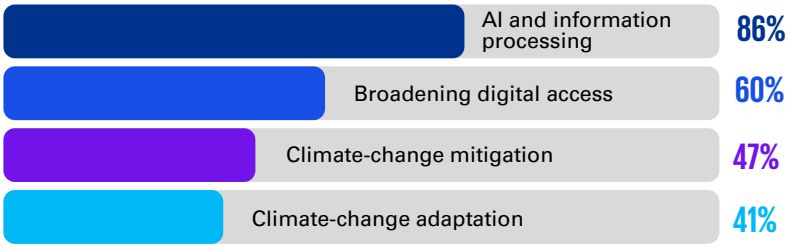
Climate, reporting and regulatory expectations are becoming part of finance, procurement, operations and product decisions. Employees need sustainability literacy and the ability to work with ESG data and trade-offs.

Customer and market expectations

Customers expect faster, simpler and more personalised experiences, while also demanding trust, transparency and responsible use of data. Employees need customer insight, communication and ethical judgment.

Digital transformation and sustainability are moving to the centre of business strategy
The evidence shows that organisations increasingly view technology and the green transition as forces that will reshape business models, investment and capability needs.

Employers expecting each trend to transform business by 2030



Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum, 2025

71%

of global CEOs are investing in AI to strengthen resilience and future growth.

KPMG Global CEO Outlook 2025

Workforce implication: digital, data and sustainability capabilities are becoming enterprise-wide requirements rather than specialist capabilities held by a few functions.

How these priorities are changing the future skill requirement

Digital transformation, sustainability and changing customer expectations require employees to combine AI and data fluency, sustainability literacy and customer insight. These capabilities, supported by systems thinking, communication and ethical judgment, enable employees to redesign work, assess trade-offs and balance technology, responsible growth and customer value.

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3.2 AI and the reconfiguration of work

Artificial intelligence is reshaping work at the level of tasks, workflows and decisions before it eliminates entire jobs. Activities such as information retrieval, first-draft preparation, summarization, routine analysis and reporting can increasingly be completed or accelerated by AI. This changes how employees spend their time: less effort is required for producing and processing standard outputs, while greater emphasis is placed on defining the problem, interpreting context, validating results and translating insights into action. The result is a redistribution of work between people and technology, requiring organisations to redesign roles, clarify accountability and build a workforce that combines AI fluency with domain expertise, critical judgment and responsible decision-making.

74%
of CEOs in India believe AI workforce readiness will significantly affect growth over the next three years

Source: India CEO Outlook 2025, KPMG in India, 2025.

39%
of workers' core skills are expected to change by 2030 as technology and other forces reshape work.

Source: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum, 2025

49%
illustrative potential capacity gain for an HR Business Partner when GenAI is applied to suitable tasks.

Source: AI Workforce, KPMG in India, 2025.

What is changing in work?

Routine cognitive work is being compressed
AI can create first drafts, summarise information, retrieve knowledge and support routine analysis. The immediate effect is not the disappearance of most roles, but a reduction in the time required for selected tasks and a redistribution of employee capacity.

Human contribution is moving toward higher-value work
When machines handle more preparation and processing, employees are expected to define the problem, interpret context, challenge assumptions and convert outputs into decisions. Domain expertise therefore becomes more valuable, not less, because AI-generated answers still require informed evaluation.

Roles and workforce planning are becoming skills-led
Organisations need to identify which tasks should be automated, augmented or retained by people. This shifts workforce planning away from fixed job descriptions and toward combinations of human and digital capability, supported by role-based learning and clear accountability.

What this means for future skills and competencies

Technical fluency becomes foundational, but it is not sufficient. Future-ready employees will need to combine AI literacy with critical evaluation, domain knowledge, problem framing and ethical judgment. The practical capability is knowing what to delegate to AI, how to verify the result and when a decision must remain human-led.

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3.3 The rise of human-machine collaboration

Work is increasingly being delivered through collaboration between employees and intelligent technologies rather than through either human effort or automation alone. AI contributes speed, scale, pattern recognition and continuous execution, while people contribute intent, context, creativity, ethical judgment and accountability. As AI moves from supporting isolated tasks to participating across workflows, organisations must redesign how work is initiated, reviewed and governed. The future skills challenge is therefore not simply to teach employees how to use AI tools, but to build the ability to direct AI, assess its outputs, manage exceptions and retain human ownership of consequential decisions.

AI as a tool	AI as a collaborator	Human contribution	Governed autonomy
Supports isolated activities such as drafting, searching and summarising.	Completes connected activities and contributes across workflows.	Shifts toward framing, interpretation, verification and intervention.	Human authority increases as ambiguity, risk and impact rise.

01

AI moves from an isolated tool to an active participant in work

When AI is used as a tool, the employee performs the overall workflow and calls on the technology for a discrete activity. As AI becomes more capable, agents can combine information, complete connected tasks and recommend or initiate action. This changes the employee's role from operating software to defining outcomes, supplying context and setting the boundaries within which the system can act.

02

Work is allocated according to comparative advantage

Structured and repeatable activities with clear inputs and measurable outputs can increasingly be AI-led. Work that depends on interpretation, stakeholder needs or professional judgment is better performed jointly. Decisions involving employment, safety, rights, customers, reputation or regulatory obligations should remain human-led, even when AI supports the analysis.

03

Human oversight becomes part of the workflow, not a final approval step

Effective collaboration requires employees to test evidence, challenge assumptions, identify weak or biased outputs and intervene when circumstances fall outside normal rules. Review points and escalation triggers need to be designed into the process so that speed does not remove accountability or allow errors to travel further through the organisation.

04

The future skill set combines AI fluency with distinctly human judgment

Employees need the ability to frame problems for AI, delegate work clearly, interpret and verify outputs, manage exceptions and explain decisions. Domain expertise becomes more valuable because employees remain responsible for determining whether an AI-supported answer is relevant, fair and appropriate for the business context.

Evidence of the shift

93% of Indian leaders intend to use AI agents to extend workforce capability, and 59% already use agents to automate workstreams or business processes across teams.

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3.4 New workforce models

Workforce models are moving beyond the assumption that capability sits permanently inside fixed jobs, teams or locations. Organisations increasingly assemble talent around projects, deploy scarce skills through short-term assignments, access external specialists for defined outcomes and use internal talent marketplaces to connect employees with roles, gigs and learning opportunities. This creates more fluid career pathways and can reduce dependence on external hiring, but it also requires reliable skills data, transparent opportunity access, portable performance evidence and clear accountability for people working across organisational boundaries.

Workforce models are becoming skills-led

As organizations organise work around projects, gigs and internal marketplaces, skills become the common currency for matching people to opportunities.

Potential talent-pool expansion under skills-based hiring



Four workforce models are expanding the ways organisations access and deploy skills

Workforce model	How the model works	Capability requirement
Project-based work	Employees across functions are assembled around a defined outcome or client need, giving the organisation faster access to multidisciplinary capability.	Problem solving, rapid team formation and delivery discipline.
Internal talent marketplaces	AI-enabled platforms match employee skills and aspirations with roles, short-term gigs, mentoring and learning opportunities, making underused capacity visible.	Accurate skills profiles, self-directed careers and opportunity matching.
Gig and expert ecosystems	Freelancers, specialists and partners provide targeted expertise or surge capacity for defined outcomes, supported by clear contracting and knowledge-transfer controls.	Boundary-spanning collaboration and outcome-based management.
Cross-functional pathways	Lateral moves, rotations, secondments and project experiences allow employees to build broader capability without relying only on vertical promotion.	Learning agility, portable credentials and career navigation.

The operating model shifts from filling jobs to continuously matching skills with work

Effective talent mobility begins with trusted information about employees' skills, experience and career aspirations. Organisations can then match people with suitable projects, gigs, roles or learning opportunities and deploy capability where business demand is greatest. Each assignment should generate evidence of the skills developed and outcomes delivered, so employee profiles become more accurate over time. This creates a continuous cycle in which better skills data improves opportunity matching, faster deployment and future workforce planning, while transparent access and clear governance help preserve fairness, development and compliance..

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3.5 New workforce challenge

Trust at scale
As organisations embrace skills-based talent models, gig ecosystems and AI-enabled workforce deployment, confidence in the workforce becomes just as important as access to skills. In an increasingly fluid talent environment, organisations need greater assurance around the credentials, experience and integrity of the people contributing to business outcomes..

The research
KPMG in India India surveyed HR, Risk, Compliance and Talent Acquisition leaders across sectors to understand BGV adoption, workforce coverage, governance, operational challenges, leadership due diligence and the role of managed services and AI

Why this matters
The challenge is no longer simply finding talent with the right skills. As workforces become more fluid and technology-enabled, organisations must balance agility and accountability

Three shifts shaping workforce assurance

1. **Workforce models are expanding**
KPMG in India surveyed HR, Risk, Compliance and Talent Acquisition leaders across sectors to understand BGV adoption, workforce coverage, governance, operational challenges, leadership due diligence and the role of managed services and AI

99%	Conduct some form of screening
47%	Screen all worker categories
43%	Screen only payroll employees

2. **Stronger governance expectations**
Clear ownership and ongoing oversight are essential, yet governance maturity varies across organizations

43%	Have dedicated BGV teams
30%	Use shared HR/Compliance ownership
27%	Rely on ad hoc HR-led management
39%	Have no periodic or continuous monitoring framework

3. **Technology must earn trust**
AI can improve speed and scale, but its use in workforce screening must be balanced with accuracy, privacy and human oversight.

42%	Expect AI and automation to shape BGV
40%	Cite AI decision accuracy concerns
39%	Cite privacy and security concerns

A further 13% identify a lack of human oversight as a concern.

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Key takeaway:

The widespread adoption of workforce screening reflects the growing importance organisations place on workforce integrity and trust.

Gaps in screening practices across different worker categories highlight the governance challenges that accompany more diverse workforce models.

Increasing interest in AI-enabled screening solutions is accompanied by concerns around privacy, security and decision quality, reinforcing the need for appropriate oversight.

Enhanced due diligence and risk-based approaches are gaining prominence as organisations place greater emphasis on leadership accountability, ethics and resilience.

Future-ready organisations will need to excel at two interconnected priorities: understanding workforce capability and establishing workforce trust. Those that can combine workforce agility with confidence, transparency and sound governance will be better positioned to navigate an increasingly dynamic
world of work.

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04

Understanding the current business scenario



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4.1 Industry insight: Technology and Digital services

From technical expertise to continuous digital reinvention

The technology workforce is undergoing a fundamental shift from role-based technical specialisation to dynamic, skills-based capability models. While organisations historically relied on deep functional expertise and stable career pathways, advancements in AI, automation, cloud technologies, and data-driven operations are increasing demand for broader capabilities that combine technical proficiency with adaptability, collaboration, and business acumen.

As workforce needs evolve more rapidly, organisations that can continuously develop and redeploy skills will be better positioned to sustain innovation and competitive advantage.

Source: Future of Jobs Report 2025 (World Economic Forum); HR Tech: Beyond Imagination (PeopleStrong).

39% of workers' core skills are expected to change by 2030, highlighting the growing need for continuous learning, workforce agility, and skills-based talent strategies.

Source: Future of Jobs Report 2025 (World Economic Forum, 2025).

50% of the workforce has completed training as part of long-term learning strategies, reflecting the growing importance of continuous upskilling and reskilling.

Source: Future of Jobs Report 2025 (World Economic Forum, 2025).

Traditional model	Emerging reality
• Technology organisations primarily relied on software engineering expertise, infrastructure management, and product-centric delivery models. • Work was organised around specialized technical functions such as software development, infrastructure, testing, and support. • Talent strategies focused on hiring for predefined roles, technical certifications, and domain-specific expertise. • Workforce planning was largely driven by project requirements and traditional organisational structures. • Employee development followed structured career pathways and periodic learning interventions. • Technology platforms primarily supported workflow automation and operational efficiency.	• AI-assisted development, intelligent automation, and predictive analytics are increasingly becoming integral to how technology solutions are designed and delivered. • Cross-functional collaboration across technology, data, product, and business domains is becoming an increasingly important workforce capability for driving innovation. • Skills-first approaches are gaining prominence, with organisations emphasizing adaptable capabilities and continuous learning over static job roles. • Dynamic talent deployment, internal talent marketplaces, and real-time skills visibility are enabling greater workforce agility. • Continuous reskilling, AI-curated learning journeys, and personalised career development are becoming key workforce priorities.

Key takeaway:

The future technology workforce will be distinguished not by the depth of expertise within individual roles, but by the organisation's ability to continuously align skills, learning, and talent deployment with changing business demands. As AI reshapes how work is performed, adaptability becomes as important as expertise.

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4.2 Industry insight: Financial services

From transaction processing to intelligent financial ecosystems

Financial services organisations are evolving from workforce models centred on operational efficiency, regulatory compliance, and specialized banking expertise toward AI-enabled, skills-based ecosystems. As automation, advanced analytics, and digital technologies reshape the industry, demand is growing for capabilities such as AI fluency, data-driven decision-making, risk leadership, and customer-centric innovation. Looking ahead, success will depend on building adaptable workforces that combine human judgment, continuous learning, and technological expertise to navigate an increasingly digital and dynamic financial landscape.

Source: Banking CEO Outlook 2024 (KPMG International); Future of Finance Report (Financial Services Skills Commission);Future of Jobs Report 2025 (World Economic Forum)

79% of banking CEOs believe AI is redefining entry-level skills, highlighting the growing impact of AI on workforce capability requirements.

83% of banking CEOs are prioritising workforce reskilling for AI-enabled work.

Source: Banking and Capital Markets CEO Outlook 2025, KPMG International, 2025.

Traditional model	Emerging reality
• Employees primarily developed expertise in banking operations, transaction processing, and financial product management. • Workforce value was driven by deep knowledge of regulatory compliance, governance, and risk assessment. • Professionals built specialised expertise within finance, banking, risk, and operations functions. • Success depended on process expertise, operational control, regulatory compliance, and execution accuracy. • Customer interactions were largely supported by relationship management and domain expertise. • Career development centred on role-specific expertise and functional specialization.	• AI, data, and analytical capabilities are becoming core workforce requirements, alongside responsible AI governance, cybersecurity, digital risk management, and regulatory judgment. • Cross-functional collaboration, customer-centric thinking, and adaptability are becoming critical competencies across financial services. • Demand is increasing for professionals who can combine technological literacy, business understanding, and human judgment in increasingly digital financial environments. • Continuous learning, workforce agility, and internal talent mobility are becoming critical to meet evolving business needs. • Cybersecurity awareness, digital risk management, and regulatory judgment are becoming essential capabilities as financial ecosystems become increasingly interconnected.

Key takeaway:

As AI, data, and intelligent technologies reshape financial services, competitive advantage will increasingly depend on workforce capabilities rather than technology alone. Future-ready organizations are investing in AI literacy, data interpretation, digital risk management, customer-centric thinking, and continuous learning to build agile workforces capable of adapting to evolving business, regulatory, and customer demands. Organisations that strengthen workforce skills, talent mobility, and human-AI collaboration will be better positioned to drive sustainable growth and resilience.

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4.3 Industry insight: manufacturing and industrial enterprises

From operational scale to intelligent productivity

Manufacturing organisations are evolving from workforce models centred on operational efficiency and engineering expertise toward digitally enabled, skills-based ecosystems. As AI, automation, robotics, and connected technologies transform manufacturing operations, demand is growing for capabilities such as AI and data literacy, digital manufacturing, analytical thinking, and human-machine collaboration. Future competitiveness will increasingly depend on workforce agility, continuous learning, and the ability to integrate human expertise with intelligent technologies.

89% Of manufacturing leaders believe managing AI agents will become an important workplace skill within the next five years.

83% Of manufacturers plan to upskill their workforce to address future capability requirements.

Source: India's trillion-dollar manufacturing ambition requires a workforce productivity revolution (KPMG in india); global tech report: industrial manufacturing (KPMG)

Traditional model	Emerging reality
• Manufacturing operations largely depended on manual processes, standardized production practices, and labor-intensive execution. • Workforce productivity was primarily driven by scale, operational efficiency, and role-based specialisation on the shop floor. • Critical knowledge often resided with experienced workers and was transferred through informal, experience-based learning. • Work was organised within functional silos, with limited collaboration across production, technology, and support functions. • Performance management focused on operational outputs, efficiency measures, and traditional production metrics. • Workforce planning was based on fixed roles, hierarchical structures, and traditional labor models.	• AI, automation, and data-driven capabilities are becoming core workforce requirements for increasingly predictive and responsive manufacturing operations. • Organisations are redesigning work, workforce structures, and operating models to unlock productivity and business value. • Manufacturers are focusing on knowledge codification, workforce upskilling, and digital capability development to reduce dependence on tribal knowledge. • Cross-functional collaboration between operations, technology, data, security, and business teams is becoming critical to drive innovation and ai adoption. • Data literacy, digital problem-solving, and analytical thinking are becoming increasingly important across manufacturing roles. • Workforce agility, multi-skilling, internal mobility, and human-ai collaboration are becoming essential to address evolving business and talent needs.

Key takeaway:

Future manufacturing leaders will be distinguished not by scale alone, but by their ability to build agile, digitally enabled workforces. As AI, automation, and connected technologies reshape production environments, organisations that continuously develop critical skills and workforce capabilities will be better positioned to drive productivity, innovation, and long-term competitiveness.

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4.4 industry insight: healthcare and life sciences

From clinical expertise to digital health capabilities

Healthcare organisations are evolving from workforce models centred on clinical expertise toward digitally enabled, skills-based care delivery. As AI, digital health technologies, telemedicine, and connected care ecosystems transform healthcare, demand is growing for capabilities such as digital health literacy, data-driven decision-making, AI fluency, and patient-centric care. Future competitiveness will increasingly depend on digital health literacy, data-driven decision making, AI-enabled practices, and the ability to combine clinical expertise with intelligent technologies.

92% of healthcare CEOs agree their boards are equipped to navigate the adoption of advanced technologies such as AI..

71% of healthcare CEOs plan to focus on retaining and retraining high-potential talent as part of their long-term workforce strategy in response to AI

72% say their organisation is keeping pace with the speed of AI development

Source: Healthcare CEO Outlook 2025, KPMG International; Skilling India's Healthcare Workforce for Digital Health and AI, KPMG India; Future of Jobs Report 2025, World Economic Forum, 2025.

Traditional model	Emerging reality
• Healthcare delivery was primarily centred on in-person care, clinical expertise, and hospital-based service models. • Clinical and operational decisions largely relied on professional expertise, experience, and manual processes. • Healthcare systems focused on expanding workforce capacity to meet growing patient demand. • Workforce development emphasized clinical training with limited integration of digital technologies and ai. • Care delivery and health information often operated through fragmented systems and siloed workflows. • Healthcare roles were largely defined by traditional clinical and administrative responsibilities.	• Organisations are increasingly investing in digital health, data, cybersecurity, and AI upskilling to improve workforce readiness and care delivery. • Health informatics, data literacy, and predictive analytics are becoming critical capabilities for clinical and operational decision-making. • Healthcare professionals are increasingly required to combine clinical expertise with digital health literacy, virtual care capabilities, ai-enabled decision support, human judgment, and responsible ai use. • Cross-disciplinary collaboration, patient-centred communication, and continuous learning are becoming essential competencies in digitally enabled care environments. • New roles and career pathways are emerging across clinical informatics, health data analytics, ai governance, privacy, and cybersecurity.

Key takeaway:

As digital health, AI, and connected care models reshape healthcare delivery, workforce readiness is becoming a strategic priority. Future-ready healthcare organizations will require professionals who combine clinical expertise with digital health literacy, data-driven decision making, ai-enabled capabilities, and human-centred care. Continuous learning, workforce adaptability, and responsible human-ai collaboration will be critical to delivering effective, connected, and patient-centred healthcare.

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4.5 Industry Insight: Consumer & Retail

From transactional retail models to personalised, technology-enabled consumer experiences

Consumer and retail organisations are evolving from workforce models centred on merchandising expertise and operational execution toward digitally enabled, customer-centric, and data-driven capability models. As AI, customer analytics, and intelligent technologies reshape retail operations and experiences, organisations are increasingly prioritizing digital fluency, data literacy, customer intelligence, and workforce adaptability. Future competitiveness will depend on the ability to combine customer-centric thinking, analytical decision-making, continuous learning, and human-AI collaboration to respond to evolving consumer needs.

73% of consumer and retail CEOs are redesigning roles and career paths to prepare their workforce for AI-enabled ways of working.

94% of consumer and retail leaders believe managing AI agents will become an essential workplace capability within the next five years.

Source: Consumer & Retail CEO Outlook, KPMG International, 2025; Global Tech Report 2025: Consumer & Retail, KPMG International.; Future of Jobs Report , World Economic Forum, 2025

Traditional model	Emerging reality
• Customer engagement relied primarily on relationship management and traditional retail channels. • Workforce value was built on merchandising, sales, and operational expertise. • Business decisions were largely informed by historical sales trends and managerial experience. • Employees focused on executing standardized retail, merchandising, and operational processes. • Career development followed structured functional pathways across retail and operations functions.	• Data literacy, customer analytics, digital fluency, and AI-enabled decision-making are becoming increasingly important workforce capabilities for delivering personalised experiences and driving business growth. • AI literacy, human-AI collaboration, and technology-enabled problem-solving skills are becoming essential across consumer and retail roles. • Customer insight interpretation, customer-centric thinking, adaptability, and cross-functional collaboration are becoming critical competencies in increasingly dynamic retail environments. • Continuous learning, workforce agility, and adaptable career pathways are becoming essential to long-term workforce success. • AI governance, data privacy management, cybersecurity awareness, and digital trust capabilities are becoming increasingly important as organizations expand their use of intelligent technologies.

Key takeaway:

As AI, data, and intelligent technologies reshape consumer and retail organizations, competitive advantage will increasingly depend on workforce capabilities rather than technology alone. Future-ready organisations are investing in data literacy, customer analytics, digital fluency, customer-centric thinking, and continuous learning to build agile workforces capable of delivering personalised experiences and adapting to evolving consumer expectations. Organisations that strengthen workforce skills, human-AI collaboration, and internal mobility will be best positioned to drive sustainable growth and innovation.

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4.6 Industry Insight: Energy and Infrastructure

From Asset-Intensive Operations to Intelligent, Connected Infrastructure Ecosystems

Energy and infrastructure organisations are undergoing significant workforce transformation as AI, automation, advanced analytics, and sustainability priorities reshape how assets are managed and operated. While technical expertise and operational excellence remain critical, organizations increasingly require employees who can leverage data, work alongside intelligent technologies, and adapt to rapidly evolving business and regulatory demands. As digital transformation accelerates, the sector is moving toward a more agile, technology-enabled workforce model that combines engineering expertise with digital, analytical, and collaborative capabilities.

96% of energy leaders believe managing AI agents will become an important workforce capability within the next five years.

69% of energy executives identify AI as a strategic technology investment priority.

42% of organisations cite improving data flows and access to insights as a key priority for enhancing decision-making and operational performance.

Source: Global tech report 2025, Energy, KPMG International, 2025; Future of Jobs Report 2025, World Economic Forum, 2025.

Traditional model	Emerging reality
• Workforce value was driven by deep engineering expertise, asset management knowledge, and operational experience.	• Organisations are increasingly seeking AI, data, and digital capabilities alongside traditional engineering expertise.
• Employees relied heavily on experience-based decision-making and manual monitoring of assets and operations.	• Data literacy, real-time analytics, and AI-enabled decision-making capabilities are becoming increasingly important across energy and infrastructure roles.
• Workforce development focused primarily on technical specialization and compliance with operational standards.	• Continuous upskilling in digital technologies, data analytics, cybersecurity, and AI is becoming essential to workforce readiness.
• Work was organised around specialized functions with distinct responsibilities across operations, engineering, and maintenance.	• Cross-functional collaboration across operations, technology, data, and cybersecurity teams is becoming increasingly important.
• Career progression was largely based on role-specific expertise developed through established workforce structures.	• Workforce agility, human-AI collaboration, and adaptable career pathways are becoming critical to meet evolving business needs.
• Operational knowledge was often developed through experience and retained within specific roles or teams.	• Organisations are investing in knowledge-sharing, digital learning, and technology-enabled workforce development to build future-ready talent.

Key takeaway:

As AI, automation, and intelligent technologies transform the energy and infrastructure sector, competitive advantage will increasingly depend on an organisation's ability to combine technical expertise with digital, analytical, and adaptive workforce capabilities. Organisations must continuously evolve workforce skills to support increasingly data-driven and technology-enabled operations. The future of the sector will be shaped not only by technological advancement, but by the ability to build agile workforces that can collaborate effectively with intelligent systems, adapt to changing business needs, and drive innovation while maintaining operational resilience and reliability.

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4.7 Common cross-industry capability trends

As organisations navigate AI adoption, digital transformation, sustainability priorities, and evolving business models, workforce requirements are converging around a shared set of technical, human, and leadership capabilities. While industry-specific requirements continue to vary, future-ready organizations are increasingly balancing advanced technical skills with enduring human competencies to build resilient, adaptable, and high-performing workforces.

Emerging technical skills	Emerging human & leadership competencies
• AI & Data Literacy • Digital Fluency and Technological Literacy • Analytics and Data-Driven Decision-Making • Cybersecurity and Digital Risk Management • Human-AI Collaboration • Industry-Specific Digital and Functional Expertise	• Adaptability and Learning Agility • Collaboration and Cross-Functional Working • Customer-Centric Thinking • Critical Thinking and Problem Solving • Ethical Judgment and Responsible Decision-Making • Leadership and Change Management

Technical skills are becoming foundational across industries.
Organisations increasingly require employees who can leverage AI, data, analytics, and digital technologies to improve decision-making, productivity, innovation, and operational performance

Human capabilities are emerging as critical differentiators.
As intelligent technologies automate routine and repeatable tasks, competencies such as adaptability, collaboration, critical thinking, ethical judgment, and customer-centricity are becoming increasingly valuable.

Human-AI collaboration is reshaping the future of work
Organisations are redesigning roles and workflows to combine human expertise with AI-enabled tools, increasing the importance of both technical fluency and sound judgment.

Continuous learning and workforce agility are becoming strategic priorities.
Rapidly evolving capability requirements are driving investments in upskilling, reskilling, internal mobility, and skills-based talent development across industries.

Skills-based workforce models are gaining momentum.
Organisations are increasingly focusing on capabilities rather than job titles, enabling more dynamic talent deployment, greater workforce flexibility, and improved responsiveness to evolving business needs.

Trust, ethics, and responsible technology use are becoming enterprise-wide priorities.
Capabilities related to AI governance, cybersecurity, data privacy, digital trust, and responsible decision-making are growing in importance as organisations expand the use of intelligent technologies.

Key takeaway:

Across industries, competitive advantage is increasingly shifting from access to talent alone toward the ability to continuously build, develop, and redeploy workforce capabilities. Future-ready organisations are balancing technical skills such as AI, data, analytics, and digital fluency with human and leadership competencies including adaptability, collaboration, ethical judgment, customer-centricity, and learning agility to create resilient and future-ready workforces.

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05

How leading organisations are responding



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5.1 Leading organisations are rethinking how they access, develop and deploy future skills

Emerging technologies, changing business models and evolving ways of working are reshaping the skills and competencies organisations need. Leading organizations are responding through a combination of external hiring, internal development, experiential learning, talent mobility and AI-enabled workforce planning. The objective is not to predict every skill the organisation will need. It is to build the ability to identify emerging requirements early and access or develop capabilities as demand changes.

Five connected organisational responses

Organisations are combining multiple approaches to close immediate gaps while building a workforce that can adapt to future requirements.



01

Identify emerging requirements

Organisations are translating business strategy, technology shifts and role changes into priority skills and behavioral competencies.

02

Acquire new capabilities

Skills-first hiring, apprenticeships, external specialists and ecosystem partnerships provide access to capabilities not currently available internally.

03

Build skills internally

Targeted upskilling, reskilling and career pathways help employees develop technical, functional and human capabilities required for evolving work.

04

Learn through experience

Projects, simulations, mentoring and cross-functional assignments allow employees to build and demonstrate new capabilities through work.

05

Move skills to demand

Internal talent marketplaces and AI-enabled matching connect employees with roles, projects and opportunities where their capabilities are most relevant.

Organisations cannot hire their way out of every emerging skills gap. Sustainable workforce readiness requires a balanced approach to acquiring critical capabilities externally, developing adjacent skills internally and deploying talent more dynamically.

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Organisations are combining multiple pathways to secure future skills

85%
of employers plan to prioritise workforce upskilling by 2030.

70%
of employers plan to hire people with new skills to address emerging capability requirements.

50%
of employers plan to transition employees from declining roles into areas of growing demand.

Source: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum, 2025.

Key takeaway:

Leading organisations are addressing future skill and competency needs through a balanced talent strategy that combines external acquisition, internal development, experiential learning and dynamic workforce deployment.



5.2 Connecting skills, learning and talent decisions

Leading organisations are moving beyond traditional talent models by integrating skills intelligence, learning, and workforce deployment into connected talent ecosystems that improve agility, internal mobility, and capability development.

Global Technology Company : enabling skills-first talent decisions

A leading technology comany shifted selected technology roles from degree-centric hiring to a skills-first approach, redefining role requirements around demonstrated capabilities. The organisation also expanded alternative talent pathways through apprenticeships, credentials, and experiential learning, while linking learning directly to workplace application.

- **50% of their job openings had bachelor's degree requirements removed in 2021.**
- **20% of their US hires were reported to be individuals without four-year degrees in 2023.**
- **80+ hours was the reported average annual time spent by their employees on professional development.**



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Global technology company : Embedding capability development into daily work

Another leading technology company translated its growth mindset philosophy into everyday talent practices by reinforcing desired behaviours through leadership actions, managerial coaching, and organisational systems. This helped embed continuous learning and development into employees' day-to-day experiences.

- **131,000 employees were instilled with a growth mindset and it was operationalised across their global workforce at the time of the reported transformation.**
- **6+ Reinforcement tools: They used interactive modules, manager conversation guides, leadership storytelling, games, quizzes and ongoing measurement to embed growth-mindset behaviours.**

Global onsumer goods company : Connecting skills with opportunity

Through internal talent marketplaces, organisations increased visibility of employee skills and aspirations while matching talent to projects, learning opportunities, and business needs. AI-enabled recommendations and project-based experiences helped accelerate capability development and workforce deployment.

- **300,000+ hours were reported as unlocked in a two-month period through the talent marketplace.**
- **8300 employees were rapidly redeployed during the pandemic from business areas experiencing lower demand to areas that continued to grow**
- **90,000+ employees were covered across more than 90 countries in the reported platform rollout.**

Global industrial technology company: Connecting skills intelligence with workforce deployment

A leading global industrial technology company leveraged its open talent market to make employee skills, experiences, and career aspirations visible across the organisation. By using AI-enabled matching, the platform connected employees with projects, mentors, learning opportunities, and internal roles, embedding capability development into real work experiences while improving workforce deployment and internal mobility.

- **89% adoption of the open talent market was reported in 2025, rising from 60% shortly after its launch.**
- **13,400 project matches: The platform was reported to have enabled 13,400 gig or project matches by 2025.**
- **550,000 hours unlocked: Vendor case material reports that the platform unlocked approximately 550,000 hours of workforce capacity.**

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06

The future skills and competency



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6.1 Future skills: Building workforce readiness

The future of work is no longer a distant agenda. As AI, automation, digital technologies, and sustainability imperatives reshape business models, organisations are facing an unprecedented skills transformation. The challenge is not only to anticipate emerging capabilities but also to build a workforce that can adapt, learn, and thrive in a rapidly evolving environment.

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025, based on over 1,000 employers representing 14 million workers across 55 economies, shows how fast that 'what' is changing. AI and digitalisation are reshaping roles and, with them, the skills organisations need to build, buy and borrow.

63%
of employers cite skill gaps as the biggest barrier to transformation

59/100
workers will need training by 2030

86%
of employers expect AI to transform their business by 2030

Sources: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum, 2025

Skill clusters that are shaping the future workforce readiness:

AI and data fluency
- **AI literacy:** use and challenge AI outputs
- **Data skills:** analyse and act on insights
- **Prompting:** apply AI tools to daily tasks

Fastest growing

Digital Capability
- **Cybersecurity:** protect data and systems
- **Cloud and networks:** digital platform use
- **Automation:** redesign repeatable processes

Rising demand

Cognitive Excellence
- **Analytical thinking:** break down problems
- **Creative thinking:** generate new solutions
- **Systems thinking:** connect the big picture

Core skill

Leadership and social influence
- **Stakeholder management:** build alignment
- **Change leadership:** lead transformation
- **Coaching:** develop talent

Rising demand

Learning and adaptability
- **Curiosity:** keep learning as work changes
- **Agility:** shift priorities and roles quickly
- **Resilience:** perform through disruption

Rising demand

Sustainability and Business Acumen
- **Environmental stewardship:** green practice
- **ESG literacy:** reporting and regulation
- **Customer focus:** design around user needs

Emerging

Declining

Demand for manual, routine and rules-based tasks is expected to decline as automation and AI increasingly perform predictable and repetitive activities.

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6.2 Future competencies: Enabling human and organisational performance

While skills tell us what a person can do; competencies tell us how well they apply it when conditions are uncertain. As AI takes on routine tasks, employers value the human side of performance: analytical thinking is the most sought-after core skill (about seven in ten employers), followed by resilience, flexibility and agility, and leadership and social influence.

	Skills - The 'what'	**Competencies** - The 'how'
What it is	Specific, teachable abilities to perform a task, such as data analysis or coding	Clusters of knowledge, skills, behaviours and mindsets applied effectively in context
How it is built	Courses, certification and practice; can be acquired relatively quickly	Experience, feedback, coaching and stretch assignments over time
How it is assessed	Tests, certifications and work samples	Simulations, structured interviews, 360-degree feedback, psychometrics (ADC)

Competencies for a future-ready workforce:



Learning agility

Continuously acquires and applies new knowledge and skills.

Looks like: Quickly adapts to new tools, roles and ways of working.



Human-AI judgment

Applies critical judgment to AI-enabled decisions and recommendations.

Looks like: Validates outputs and exercises appropriate oversight.



Ethical judgement

Weighs fairness, privacy and risk in decisions.

Looks like: Flags bias or data misuse and escalates it.



Digital curiosity

Explores new technologies and embraces continuous learning.

Looks like: Experiments with new tools and applies lessons quickly.



Innovation mindset

Challenges conventional approaches and explores new possibilities.

Looks like: Generates ideas and experiments with alternative solutions.



Emotional intelligence

Reads people and context to lead and collaborate.

Looks like: Listens actively and adapts style to people.



Customer centricity

Places customer and stakeholder needs at the centre of decisions.

Looks like: Designs solutions around user needs and feedback.



Change leadership

Mobilises people and shapes new ways of working.

Looks like: Explains the 'why' and brings teams along.

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6.3 Evolving priorities

As organisations move up the leadership hierarchy, the balance between skills and competencies evolves. While technical and digital fluency remain essential across all levels, senior roles increasingly demand stronger capabilities in strategic judgement, governance, influence, and change leadership. A one-size-fits-all competency framework is therefore insufficient; each career stage requires distinct priorities, expectations, and development pathways.

	Frontline Early-career and individual contributors	**Managers** Team and function heads	**Leaders** Executives and CXOs
Role in the AI era	Apply AI tools in daily work and build new capabilities.	Translate strategy, effectively manage talent and coach teams	Set strategic direction and shape organisational culture and capability.
Priority skills	• AI and data fluency • Digital capability • Learning and adaptability	• AI and data fluency • Digital capability • Cognitive excellence • Leadership and social influence	• AI and data fluency • Leadership and social influence • Sustainability and business acumen
Priority competencies	• Learning agility • Digital curiosity • Human-AI judgment	• Emotional intelligence • Innovation mindset • Change leadership • Customer centricity	• Change leadership • Ethical judgement • Customer centricity • Emotional intelligence
How to build them	Learning academies, digital learning platforms, certifications and on-the-job development	Leadership programmes, cross-functional projects, coaching and stretch assignments	Executive education, strategic immersion, governance forums and peer learning networks
The key shift	From executing tasks to continuously reskilling	From supervising work to orchestrating people and technology	From command and control to enabling and governing

Indicative emphasis	**Frontline**	**Managers**	**Leaders**
Technical depth	●●●●	●●●○	●●○○
Data and AI skills	●●●○	●●●○	●●○○
People leadership	●○○○	●●●●	●●●○
Strategic judgement	●○○○	●●○○	●●●●
Change leadership	●○○○	●●●○	●●●●

Note: emphasis ratings are KPMG's indicative view, not survey data.

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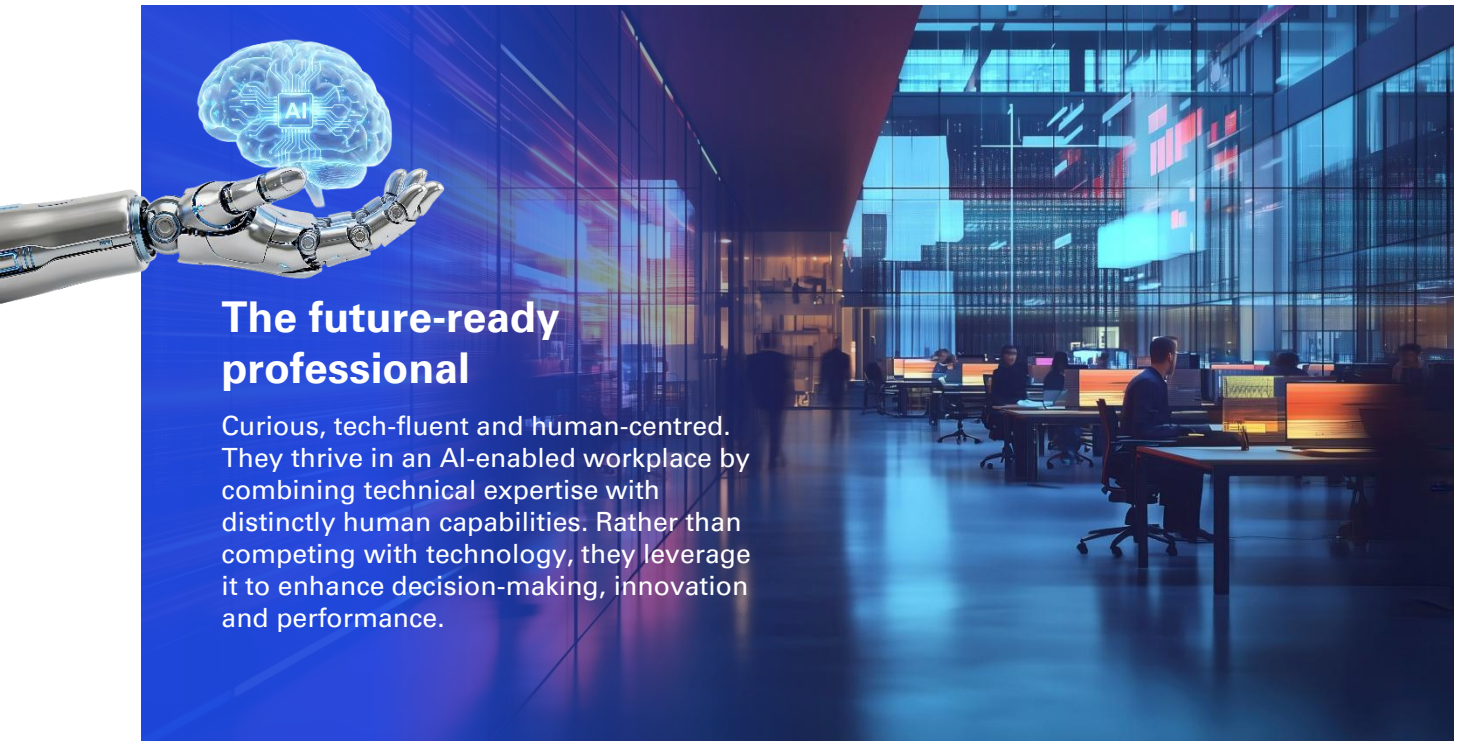
6.4 The future-ready workforce persona

As technology, AI and new ways of working continue to reshape the nature of work, organisations are placing equal emphasis on both skills and competencies to build workforce readiness. The future-ready employee is no longer defined by a role or job title, but by the ability to continuously learn, adapt and create value across changing business contexts. This persona represents the attributes increasingly observed in high-performing talent across industries.



The future-ready professional

Curious, tech-fluent and human-centred. They thrive in an AI-enabled workplace by combining technical expertise with distinctly human capabilities. Rather than competing with technology, they leverage it to enhance decision-making, innovation and performance.

Mindset

- Curious and growth-oriented
- Learns, unlearns and relearns by habit
- Comfortable with ambiguity
- Sees AI as an enabler, not a threat

Behaviours

- Uses AI as a thought partner
- Collaborates across functions and borders
- Owns personal development
- Shares knowledge openly

Capabilities

- T-shaped: deep expertise, broad range
- Digital, data and AI fluency
- Sound judgement and ethics
- Strong communication and influence

Career pattern

- Moves across roles, projects and gigs
- Builds a portfolio of skills, not a title
- Grows via internal talent marketplaces
- Expects continuous reskilling

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The future-ready professional is defined not by a role, function or job title, but by the ability to create value amid continuous change. As organisations transition towards skills-based and capability-driven talent models, success increasingly depends on combining technical expertise with sound judgment, adaptability and collaborative effectiveness. Their contribution is measured not only by what they know, but by how effectively they apply their capabilities to solve emerging business challenges and seize new opportunities.

Operating in an environment shaped by technological advancement, ai-enabled work and evolving career pathways, these professionals are comfortable navigating ambiguity and complexity. They leverage data and technology to enhance decision-making, work seamlessly across functions and disciplines, and proactively evolve their capabilities to meet shifting organisational priorities. Their agility and resilience enable them to remain relevant and effective in an increasingly dynamic world of work.

Today's employee versus the future-ready employee

Today	Future-ready
Defined by job title and role	Led by skills, moves across roles and projects
Learns in scheduled training	Learns continuously in the flow of work
Uses technology as a tool	Collaborates with AI as a partner
Waits for direction	Owns outcomes and adapts proactively



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07

Way forward



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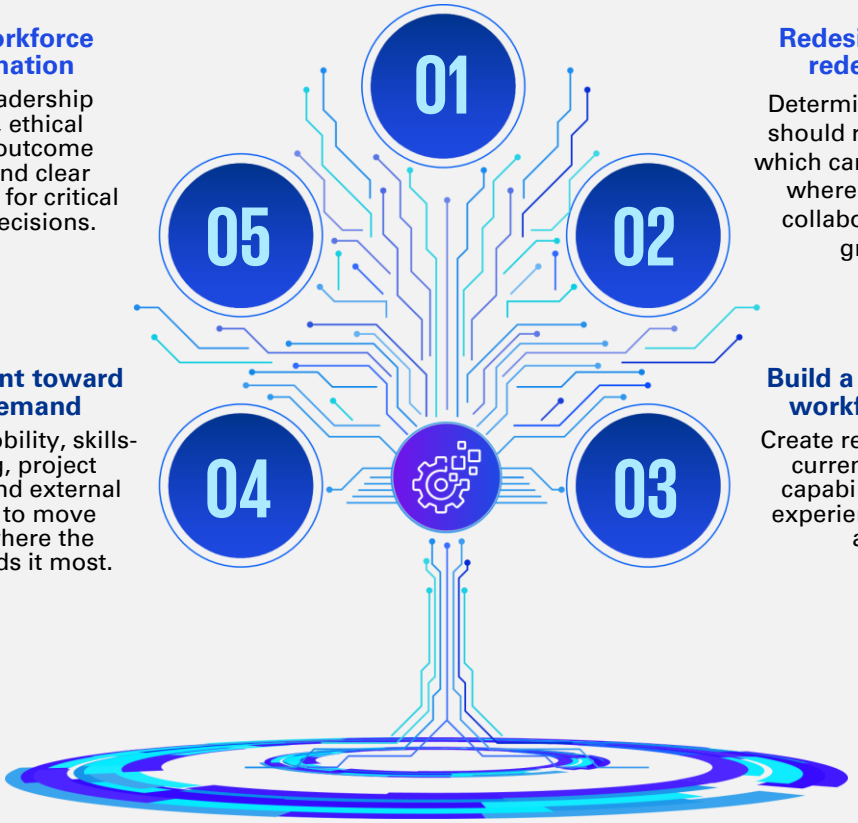
Building a future-ready organisation requires coordinated action across the enterprise

Organisations do not become future-ready through a single learning programme, technology platform or competency framework. Workforce readiness is built when business strategy, work design, capability development, talent deployment and leadership accountability evolve together.

Anchor capabilities in business strategy

Translate strategic priorities, technology investments and operating-model changes into the skills and competencies required to execute them.



Redesign work before redesigning roles

Determine which activities should remain human-led, which can be AI-enabled and where human-machine collaboration can create greater value.

Build a dynamic view of workforce capability

Create reliable visibility into current skills, adjacent capabilities, proficiency, experience and workforce aspirations.

Mobilise talent toward priority demand

Use internal mobility, skills-based hiring, project deployment and external ecosystems to move capability where the business needs it most.

Govern workforce transformation

Establish leadership ownership, ethical guardrails, outcome measures and clear accountability for critical workforce decisions.

The way forward is not to predict every capability the organisation will need. It is to build the organisational discipline to identify, develop and deploy capabilities as business requirements evolve.

Key takeaway:

Workforce readiness becomes sustainable when capability decisions are embedded in business planning, work design and everyday talent practices.



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